

1715–1781), who immigrated from Ireland to Philadelphia with his family ca. 1754; merchant; Presbyterian; died at Pittsgrove, New Jersey. **MOTHER:** Mary (ca. 1713–1789), who died at her farm in Salem County, “West Jersey.” **BROTHERS:** Robert (ca. 1732–1806), of Baltimore by 1765, a merchant, customs collector of the Port of Baltimore, 1795–1806, who married Frances Young; probably David (?–1757), of Philadelphia and Snow Hill, Worcester County, a Presbyterian clergyman, member of the class of 1754, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey; and possibly John (?–ca. 1790), of Philadelphia, a merchant, who died in Kentucky. **SISTER:** probably Mary, who married Samuel Eakin (1745–1783) of Delaware, a Presbyterian clergyman. **MARRIED** first, Susanna Schleydoon (?–by 1776). **MARRIED** second, on April 18, 1776, Catherine (?–by 1787), daughter of David Stewart of Glaslough, Ireland, and wife Isabella Conyngham. Her brother was David Stewart (1746–1817), who immigrated to Baltimore Town by 1766, a merchant and Presbyterian, who married in 1774 Elizabeth Philpot (ca. 1753–1838). **CHILDREN.** **SONS:** John; John Henry (?–1820), secretary and interpreter to James Monroe during mission to France, 1794–1796, with the U.S. Department of State by 1817; Henry (?–1811), studied law with Henry Clay and died in Lexington County, Kentucky; William; and Samuel. **DAUGHTERS:** Letitia (ca. 1768–1802); Elizabeth Isabella, who married in 1811, as his second wife, Henry Courtenay (1776–1854); Susanna (1772–?), who married Robert Hughes; and Isabella (1779–1804), who married in 1799 Henry Courtenay (1776–1854). **ADDITIONAL COMMENT:** Isabella (1779–1804) was the daughter of Catherine Stewart Purviance. **PRIVATE CAREER.** **EDUCATION:** literate. **RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION:** Presbyterian; a founder of the first Presbyterian church in Baltimore Town. **SOCIAL STATUS AND ACTIVITIES:** Mr., by 1776; Esq., by 1788. **OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE:** merchant; land developer; speculator. Purviance was a merchant in Philadelphia by 1763. Shortly after he and his brother Robert built the first rum distillery in Baltimore Town in 1765, Purviance transferred his commercial activities to Maryland, shipping staves, wheat, and bread to the West Indies in connection with Philadelphia merchants. By 1774, the Purviances were leaders of the Baltimore merchant community and were trading with European as well as American firms. During the Revolution, Purviance supplied clothing, bread, and iron to the American troops and was active in equipping

the *Defence* and Baltimore-built galleys for service. He held an interest in at least nineteen privateers between 1777 and 1780. The Purviance brothers owned a wharf in the Baltimore harbor and developed several of the original town lots, especially in the area of Commerce and Water streets. In 1777, they began speculating in western lands, accumulating large holdings in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Kentucky. Many of these western tracts were purchased under Virginia's claims putting the Purviances at odds with those prominent Marylanders who disputed Virginia's right to the land beyond the Alleghenies. **PUBLIC CAREER.** **LEGISLATIVE SERVICE:** Conventions, Baltimore County, 1st, 1774, 4th, 1775. **LOCAL OFFICES:** trustee for the poor, Baltimore County, 1773; Committee of Correspondence, Baltimore County, 1774; Committee of Observation, Baltimore County, 1774–at least 1776 (chairman); committee to draw up plan for defense of Baltimore Town, 1776; warden, Port of Baltimore, appointed for five years in 1783, elected chairman. **STANDS ON PUBLIC/PRIVATE ISSUES:** As chairman of the Baltimore County Committee of Observation in 1776, Purviance received letters relating to Gov. *Robert Eden* (1741–1784) and the British colonial secretary and ordered militia Capt. Samuel Smith to arrest Eden if he attempted to leave the province. Purviance then forwarded the allegedly incriminating letters to the Continental Congress with a note describing the Maryland Convention and Council of Safety as “timorous and inactive.” The Convention censured Purviance for circumventing and undermining its authority as the government of Maryland. Purviance remained an active patriot, lending money to Lafayette to supply his troops as they passed through Baltimore in 1781 and serving as chairman of a meeting in June 1783 of Baltimore citizens who opposed allowing Loyalists to enjoy the benefits of the Maryland constitution. In March 1786, Purviance was among the Baltimore County citizens who formed a society for “encouraging and improving” agriculture. **WEALTH DURING LIFETIME.** **PERSONAL PROPERTY:** Purviance petitioned for relief under the Act for Insolvent Debtors in July 1787, listing debts owed by himself and his brother Robert of over £16,000 current money, most of which dated from 1785. Purviance estimated debts due him at about £5,505.0.0 current money. His personal property included 4 slaves. The insolvency proceedings continued into the early 1800s and later accounts of the Purviance debts amounted to more than £36,500 current money, of which